

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend claims 1, 11 and 12, and add claims 17 through 31, as follows:

1           1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing and separating an imbricate formation  
2       of flexible, flat objects, ~~in particular, printed products, with which the flat objects by way of~~  
3       ~~during product feed, comprising a conveyor means are continuously [[fed]] feeding the items in~~  
4       an essentially regular formation to a transfer module and ~~from this are transferred transferring the~~  
5       ~~items from said transfer module to a conveyor module, characterized in that wherein~~ flat objects  
6       are fluently fed to a guide [[means]] ~~within said transfer module, [[that]] and~~ the flat objects during  
7       their ~~conveying conveyance~~ are brought into an obliquely standing position by the guide [[means]],  
8       and [[that]] the flat objects from this position ~~individually or in a defined number are separated in~~  
9       ~~a defined number~~ from the remaining flat objects by ~~way of a separating means separator,~~ and  
10      conveyed away by a conveyor [[means]].

1           2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects with  
2       the feeding are fed onto a guide surface of the guide [[means]] and are conveyed lying in an  
3       overlapping manner, wherein the trailing edge of a flat object in each case lies over the leading  
4       edge of the subsequent flat object, and the objects during the transport over the guide surface are  
5       continuously erected, wherein whereby on removal of the flat objects from the guide [[means]] the  
6       obliquely standing position of the flat objects is inclined opposite to the transport a direction of  
7       said conveyance.

1           3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects are  
2       folded sheets, wherein the fold of each folded sheet in a trailing manner lies over [[the]] a  
3       respective subsequent folded sheet and the folded sheets which stand obliquely on removal from  
4       the guide means stand on their cut-edge side.

1           4. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein the flat objects are folded sheets,  
2       wherein the fold of each folded sheet in a trailing manner lies over the respective subsequent  
3       folded sheet and the folded sheets which stand obliquely on removal from the guide means stand  
4       on their cut-edge side.

1           5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the erection of the flat objects  
2       is effected by active braking or acceleration of the flat objects at least one edge by way of conveyor  
1       means.

2           6. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects on removal are  
3       actively transferred into an obliquely standing position in the conveying direction by way of  
4       folding-over means.

1           7. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects before removal  
2       are displaced transversely to their main conveying direction.

1           8. (Original) A device for carrying out the method according to claim 1 with a product  
2       feed, comprising a conveyor means with a transfer module arranged after this and with a conveyor  
3       module for removal of flat objects from the transfer module;

4           wherein the transfer module contains a guide means which comprises a guide surface which  
5       at least in regions is inclined with respect to the horizontal, and that on the side proximal to the  
6       removal device there is arranged a brim or abutment.

1           9. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the guide surface at least in  
2       regions is designed concave or convex, or comprises at least two sections with a different  
3       inclination of the guide surface.

1           10. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the inclination of the guide  
2       surface at least in regions is more than 30°.

1           11. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 8, wherein ~~in that~~ the guide  
2       surface comprises guide elements which serve for the regional acceleration and/or braking of the  
3       flat objects.

1           12. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 8, wherein ~~in that~~ the brim or  
2       the abutment is arranged movable with respect to the guide means.

1           13. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, on that side of the guide means  
2       which is proximal to the removal device, there are arranged active means for separating individual  
3       objects or groups of objects.

1           14. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the brim or the abutment  
2       comprises movable elements conveying the objects in the removal direction.

1           15. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, in the removal region of the  
2       objects, there are arranged means for transversely displacing the objects.

1           16. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, above the guide means, there are  
2       arranged retaining means acting on the free edge of the objects.

1           17. (New) A guide, comprising:  
2                   a path comprised of a first surface guiding leading lower edges of a plurality of flat,  
3       flexible items to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface to an inclined  
4       surface, said path supporting the lower edges of the items during progressive transformation in  
5       orientation of the items into an imbricate array while the items advance from said first surface and  
6       along said inclined surface; and  
7                   an abutment extending transversely above said path to obstructively engage seriatim  
8       a lower portion of each of the items descending said convexly curved surface and terminate said

9       passage of each item along said inclined surface while the item is obliquely erect.

1           18. (New) The guide set forth in claim 17, comprised of a mechanism positioned to remove  
2       the items from engagement with said abutment by grasping the upper edges of a defined number  
3       of the items and sequentially lifting the items grasped away from said inclined surface.

1           19. (New) The guide set forth in claim 17, comprised of said inclined surface exhibiting  
2       an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

1           20. (New) A guide, comprising:

2           an abutment; and

3           a path comprised of a first surface positioned to continuously receive leading lower  
4       edges of a flow of flat, flexible items, and a curved surface leading downwardly from said first  
5       surface to an inclined surface terminated by said abutment while said path supports leading lower  
6       edges of the items with said flow of the flexible items advancing from said first surface during  
7       progressive transformation in orientation of the items within the flow into a formation with the  
8       items oriented obliquely erect at said abutment.

1           21. (New) The guide of claim 20, comprising a conveyor positioned to sequentially  
2       remove from said path, a defined number of the items embraced by said abutment.

1           22. (New) The guide of claim 20, with said curved surface comprising a convex curve.

1           23. (New) The guide of claim 20, with said curved surface comprising a concave curve.

1           24. (New) The guide of claim 20, comprised of said first surface disposed to engage cut  
2         edges of the items with folded edges of the items trailing the cut edges along said first surface.

1           25. (New) The guide of claim 20, comprised of said path engaging cut edges of the items  
2         with folded edges of the items trailing the cut edges along said first surface.

1           26. (New) Guiding, comprised of:

2                 receiving leading lower edges of a flow of flat flexible items upon a first surface  
3         leading to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with upper edges of the  
4         items trailing the lower edges during said flow along said first surface;

5                 aligning the items by precipitating a shift in orientation of the items within the flow  
6         as the items progress from said first surface via said curved surface and along a downwardly  
7         inclined surface with an abutment extending transversely across said inclined surface causing an  
8         obstructive engagement of a lower portion of a forwardmost of the items while the forwardmost  
9         item is obliquely erect; and

10                 removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1           27. (New) Guiding, as set forth in claim 26, comprised of removing the items from said  
2       engagement by individually engaging the upper edges and sequentially lifting the items  
3       corresponding to the upper edges away from said inclined surface.

1           28. (New) Guiding, as set forth in claim 26, comprised of providing said inclined surface  
2       with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

1           29. (New) Guiding, comprised of:

2           receiving cut leading edges of a flow of flat flexible items upon a first surface  
3       leading to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with folded edges of the  
4       items trailing the cut edges during said flow along said first surface;

5           aligning the items within the flow by allowing the flow to progress from said first  
6       surface via said curved surface and along a downwardly inclined surface with an abutment  
7       extending transversely across said inclined surface causing an obstructive engagement of a lower  
8       portion of a forwardmost of the items while the forwardmost item is obliquely erect; and

9           removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1           30. (New) Guiding, as set forth in claim 29, comprised of removing the items from said  
2       engagement by sequentially grasping individual ones of the folded edges and individually lifting  
3       the items corresponding to the folded edges grasped away from said inclined surface.

1        31. (New) Guiding, as set forth in claim 29, comprised of providing said inclined surface  
2        with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.